

The New Amberola **GRAPHIC**

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The New Amberola Graphic

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Editor's Notes

A very divisive statewide election campaign is underway here in Vermont this fall, and by the time you receive this issue, the results will probably be known. And yet, if no candidate for governor receives a majority of votes (there are three candidates this year), the election goes to the new Legislature in January.

Our state is truly polarized: urban against rural, liberal against conservative, pro-Civil Union against anti-Civil Union, etc., and I am not optimistic that healing is right around the corner.

--M.F.B.

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readers did not receive the last issue because they failed to notify us of a change in their address.

Don't let this happen to you! Let us know when you move (second class mail does not get forwarded automatically).

Let's Celebrate!

Louis at 100



This year we celebrate the 100th birthday of that venerable jazzman, Louis Armstrong. Louis recorded prolifically in the 1920s with such bands as King Oliver, Fletcher Henderson, and Clarence Williams. He also accompanied blues singers Sippie Wallace, Bessie Smith, Bertha "Chippie" Hill, and others.

On November 12, 1925, he made his first recordings in Chicago for OkeH under his own name, and he was a mainstay for this label until early 1932. (This early example was from his fourth OkeH session the following June 16th.)

Orthophonic at 75

Seventy-five years ago, Victor engineers began electrical recording, although innumerable sessions of acoustic recording continued till all the bugs were worked out!

The first commercial release by the new "V.E." process combined two recordings from the University of Pennsylvania's production "Joan of Arkansas." Since no. 19626 was considered to be of regional interest only, it never appeared in a monthly record supplement or annual catalogue. But it *is* the first Victor electrical issue. The side illustrated was recorded on March 20, 1925 and is actually by Jack Shilkret's Orchestra.



(see related article on page 6.)



VOLUME V

NOVEMBER 23

NUMBER 11

The PLAYGOER

TRADE MARK

A Magazine for the Theatre

Collectors who are familiar with Aileen Stanley as a recordings artist of the 1920s will be interested to learn that she also had a career on the Broadway stage, although her appearance in "Artists and Models" (1930) lasted only seven weeks. This breezy little contemporary article comes courtesy of J.R. Tennyson, and it paints Miss Stanley as a slinky, chic, and sensuous Broadway starlight. But the most intriguing revelation is that she hoped to go into the movies—an achievement which we all regret never substantially materialized.

NOVEMBER 23, 1930

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AILEEN STANLEY

OUT OF THE SCHOOL OF CHARM

By ANN AINSLEE

CALLING on Aileen Stanley, recently seen here in this season's smart version of "Artists and Models," proved a bright spot in a long, dull week. It was one of those days when anything might happen, but you knew perfectly well that it wouldn't; when you found the cream sour for breakfast and the last pair of white gloves looking as if they had fallen into a coal hole. Perhaps if we had heard her song about ro-ro-rolling along, laughing at the sun, before our visit (even if the sun happened to be sulking off in a corner at the time), we might have been less like Gloomy Gus about everything.

As it was, a knock on her door, a gracious greeting, the soft, downy depths of an arm chair—and Alice was through the Looking Glass. The secret of Miss Stanley's charm, for she has it (both ways), is instantly apparent; a cool, quiet manner and unstudied poise, of a kind to make one fly to Emily Post for a possible recipe. She didn't tell us so, but her Alma Mater must certainly have been "Charm School." We recommend the course! There was something about talking with her that made you want to rush out and dedicate something, or write a charity clause in your will. That's poise with a punch!

Miss Stanley is tall, slim, bountifully endowed with pulchritude—a likely inspiration for any couturier. As you might suppose, it was inevitable that our chatter should lead to fashions. She was rather ravishing at the moment in a soft, silky, comfy robe the color of the sky on a summer evening, and it took no imagination at all to picture her in her favorite black-and-white evening ensembles, with jade accessories or some other delectable touch.

It's a fashion-wise child who knows the striking place black-and-white holds in the mode today. But for little children, says she, no! no! They should wear all white, always, all the year around. And for young girls, all the colors that were ever invented, for color reflects and expresses youth!

We thought this over for a moment and became more and more enamoured of the idea, until a few memories of our own childhood began to flash before our mind's eye. As we remember it, Mother would have given anything for a cast-iron outfit, guaranteed against shrinkage and that could be rubbed off like the funny old celluloid collars all the parsimonious gentry used to wear. But it's a lovely idea.

And she has another idea—of a highly practical nature. It *may* start a revolution—(now all you with communistic leanings keep your seats.) Fashions, she says, should be designed separately for the little and the big, the tall and the short, the half sizes and the out sizes. Then women could choose the things which are really suitable for their type. It sounds so simple. Won't someone run home quickly now and put on his or her thinking cap (the one with the feather in it, if it is all the same to you) and start something?

Miss Stanley has always played in revues, except for "Pleasure Bound," a play in which she appeared here with Phil Baker last season. She has a hankering to do some movies, for she would like to see herself as others see her. In the past this has been impossible because of the nature of her contract with the Messrs. Shubert, but her present one will give her the opportunity which she hopes to realize in the near future.

The Orthophonic Victrola

A Three-Quarter Century Retrospect

by Martin F. Bryan

Seventy-five years ago this fall, Monday, November 2, 1925, saw the official introduction of the Orthophonic Victrola and a new line of electrically-recorded records for use on it. Publicists at Victor dubbed November 2nd "Victor Day." Although the public wasn't told of the new *recording* system for nearly a year, there was no denying that this was an astonishing new phonograph.

The previous Friday evening a select group of local "music lovers" had the first demonstration of the Orthophonic at Harvey's Music Parlors here in St. Johnsbury. While most of the copy was undoubtedly prepared by the Victor Talking Machine Co., the resulting article appeared on the front page of Saturday's local paper:

NEW VICTROLA HEARD; CRITICS SAY MARVELOUS

Can't Believe Music Reproduced— New Era in Industry

Science has again outdistanced human imagination. The workshop of the mind and the fingers—the laboratory—has once more accomplished what was called impossible.

Last night a little group of music lovers were gathered together in a local music parlor. For half an hour they listened to reproduced music from a new Orthophonic Victrola. In half an hour their most extravagant ideals of reproduced music had been surpassed—a new concept had been formed.

Astonished and delighted, superlatives were used recklessly by these few critics as they listened. Astounding! Marvelous! Divine!--and other expletives of near incredulity. But these words were feeble, pitifully inadequate to describe the unbelievable change that has been wrought in reproduced music...

In order to promote the new phonograph to its best advantage, dealers were encouraged to demonstrate it

with a specific selection of "new" records, although it's quite possible that most dealers were unaware they were electrically recorded. Indeed, the only evidence of a difference was the small V.E. in an oval found in the inner run-out area; labels were still the old "bat wing" style.

The flagship model of the new Orthophonic phonographs was the Credenza model – a large floor model with quadruple springs and a six-foot folded amplifying horn. Starting late in 1925 or early 1926, this model was featured on the front of the paper sleeve of every Victor record sold individually. This artwork was quite clever in its concept: here were musical giants patiently watching the lady place the needle into the first groove of the record so they could begin playing!



First Premier of the "new" Poland, world famous composer and pianist Paderewski, patiently awaits Modern Miss to lower the needle onto one of his new Orthophonic Victor records. Not until then will he begin playing for her!

At \$300.00, the venerable Credenza still sold well and is greatly enjoyed by collectors today. Everyone with sufficient space strives to own one, it is frequently demonstrated for friends, and it is usually the focal point of the phonograph room due to its sheer size.

And yet, let's put the Credenza into perspective. It was marketed for **barely three years!** That's right...



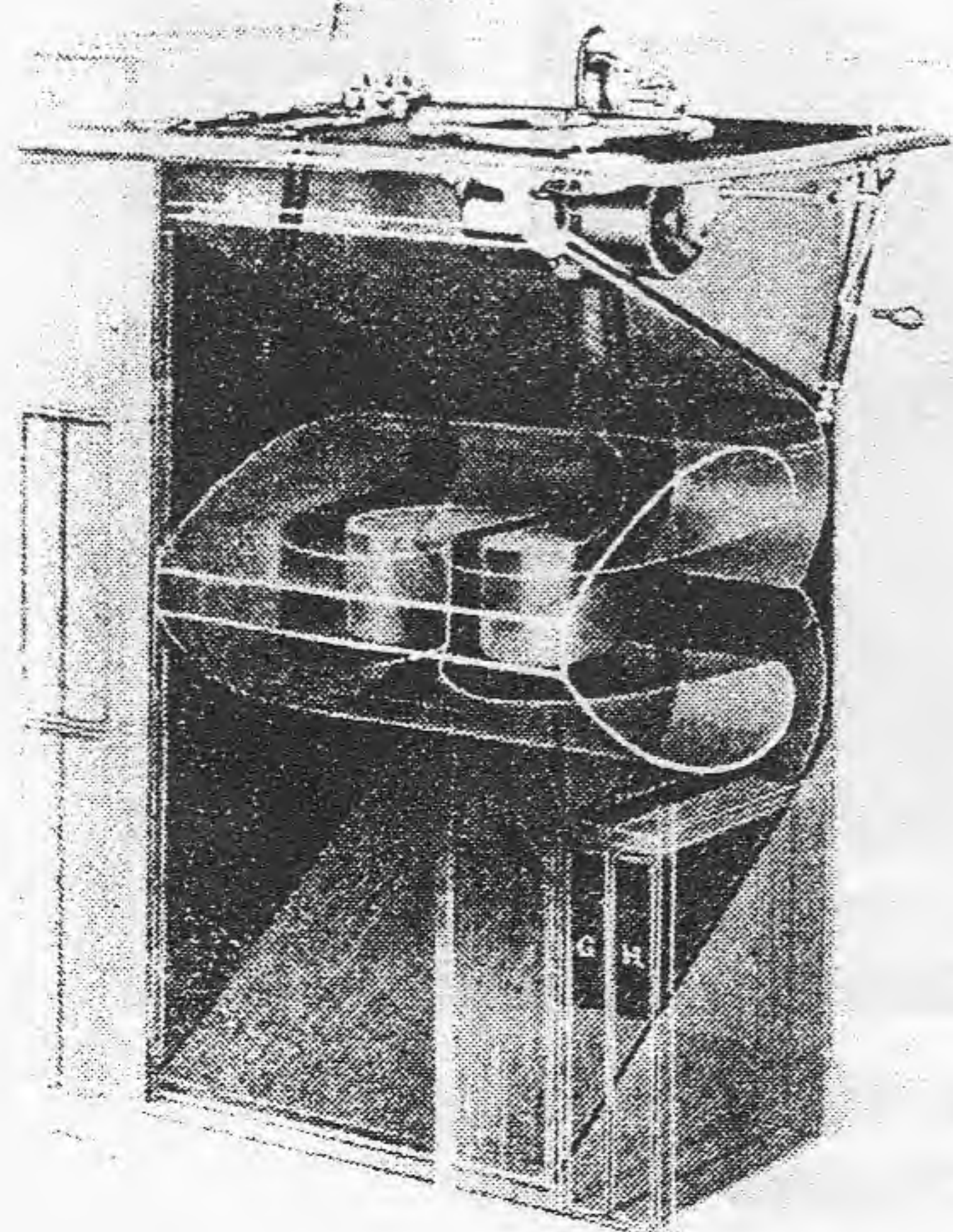
ORTHOPHONIC VICTROLA
Credenza—Number *Eight-Thirty*

List Price Spring Motor \$300.00
List Price Induction Disc Electric Motor \$335.00
List Price Universal Electric Motor \$355.00

THE Orthophonic Victrola in its highest development. Credence type cabinet walnut or mahogany veneered, blended finish, with Italian Renaissance decorations. Height 46", width 31 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", depth 22".

Orthophonic reproduction.
Non-set automatic eccentric groove brake. Record stops automatically without pre-setting.

Capacity for eighty records.
Spring motor runs twenty minutes without rewinding.



From the November, 1926
Victor Orthophonic Catalogue

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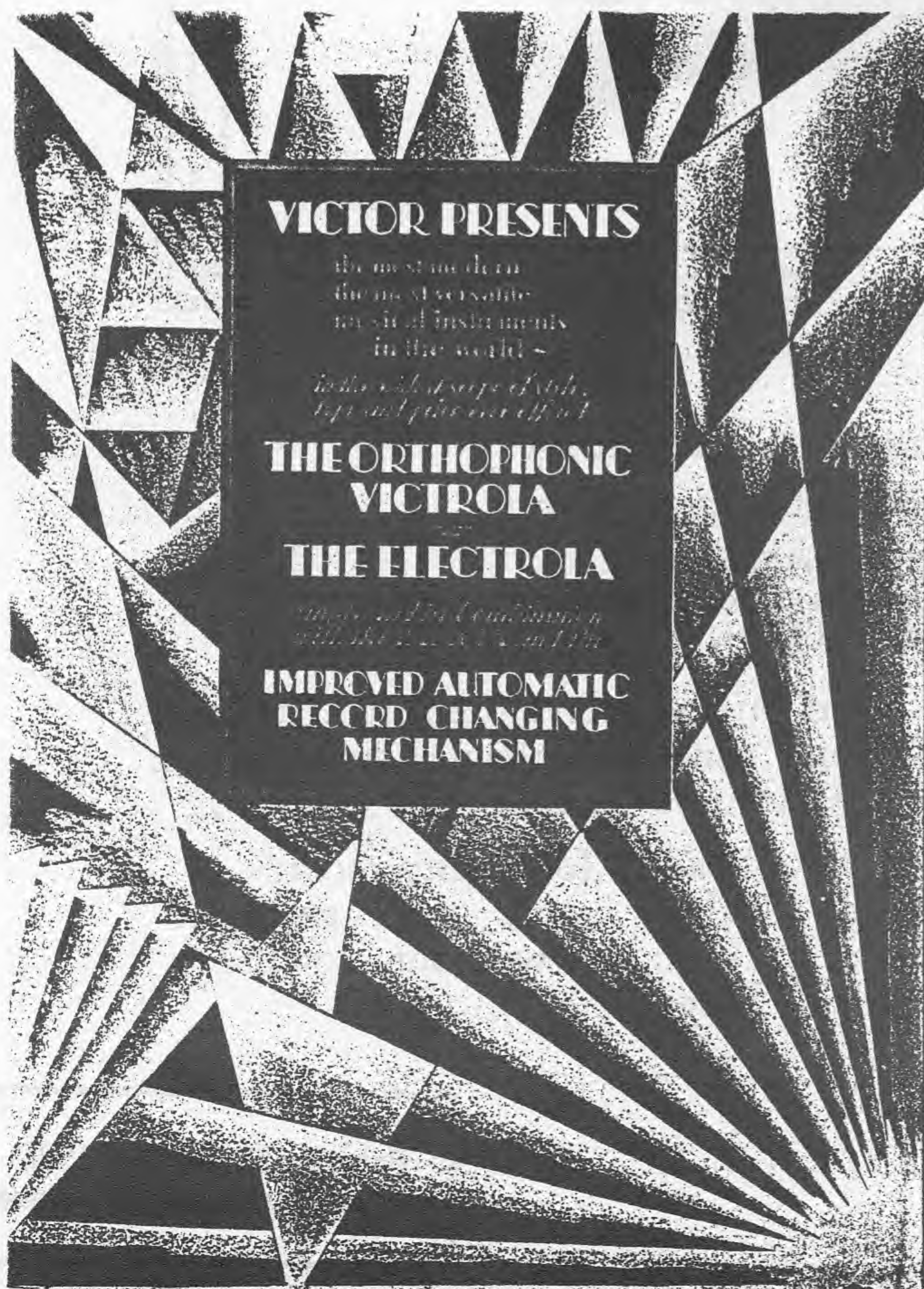
this distinguished warhorse, so associated with Orthophonic recording, appeared late in 1925 and was quietly withdrawn late in 1928. (Oddly, however, a newly designed record sleeve contained a Credenza silhouette well into 1930!)



The machine in this design is the famous Credenza. It was used on record sleeves into mid-1930...even though it had been discontinued more than a year and a half earlier.

Its replacement was the very modern looking Model *Eight-Thirty-five*, standing barely over three feet high. For various reasons, this model never had the sales appeal of the Credenza, and it is quite uncommon nowadays. It was gone by 1930.

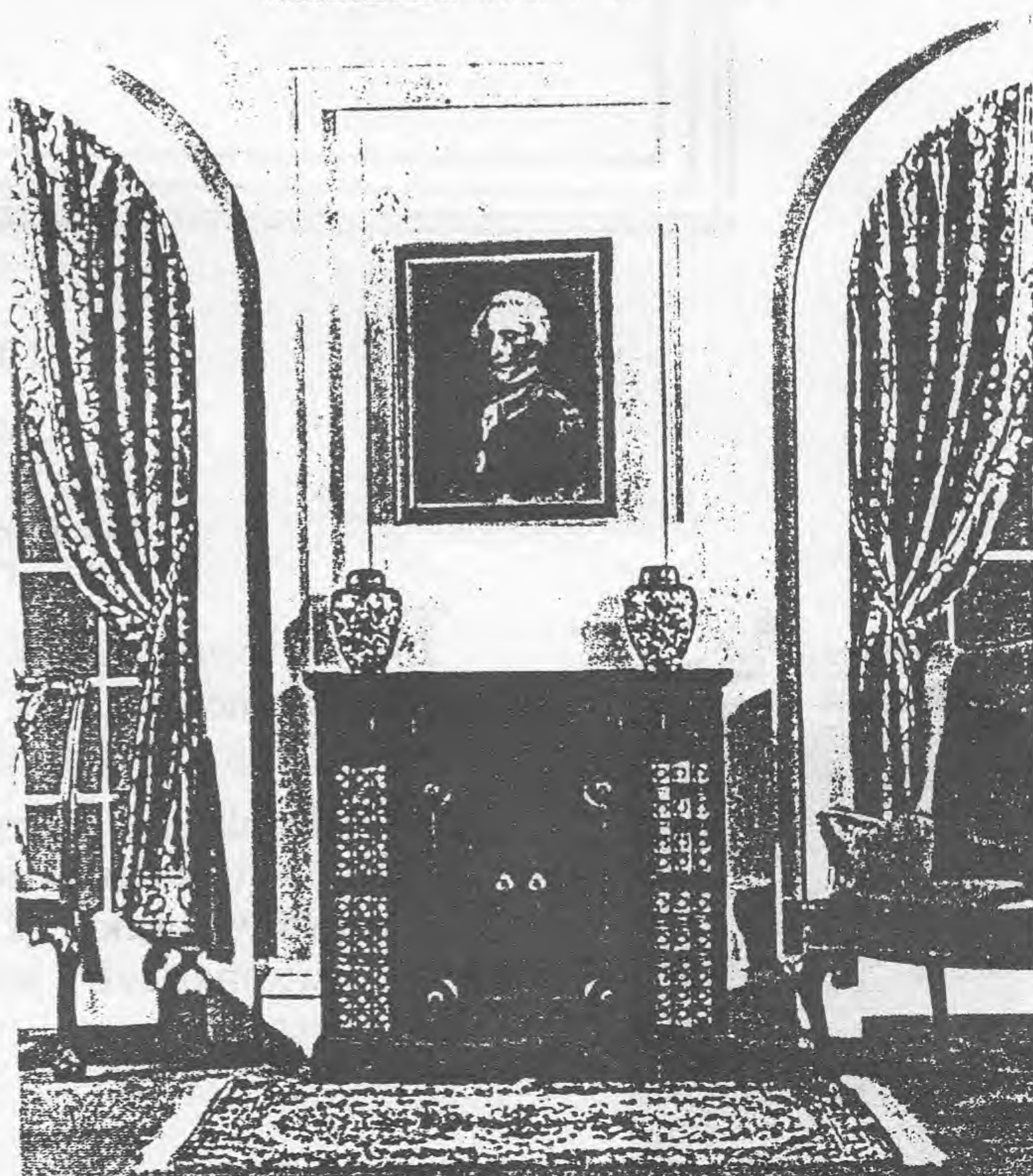
The 1928 Victor catalogue is a wonder. Its covers of pink, silver and black are a cross between the art



deco and high-tech industrial schools of design. It looks more like a program for a 1930s Busby Berkeley musical! Even some of its color plates have the look of a later era. This catalogue introduces new models, and highly touts the benefits of the Electrolas, Radiolas, and automatic Victrolas. In this era of Coolidge prosperity, Victor felt confident in offering radio-phonographs costing as much as \$1750.00! (Selections from this catalogue follow.)

All in all, the era of the acoustic Orthophonic Victrola was barely four years. By the end of 1929 Victor had phased out the last of the large wind-ups. A new flagship was taking their place: The Victor Radio-Phonograph model *RE-45* played records electrically, it had a built-in radio, and at \$275.00 was cheaper than the wind-up record-only Credenza Victrola of just a few years earlier!

THE NEW VICTOR INSTRUMENTS



The Victrola Eight-Thirty-five replaced the Credenza as Victor's "flagship" in 1928

The new series of Victor instruments—the most modern, the most versatile, the most wonderful musical instruments in the world—reproduce actual performance of music as Science has never before been able to reproduce it. Every one of these instruments will give satisfactory results—always; some of them not only reproduce, but *duplicate* with matchless fidelity the music recorded on the Orthophonic Victor record; and certain instruments of this series provide in your home a musical performance *that can be more satisfactory than an actual performance in public!*

Exaggerated claims have never been, and are not now, put forth by the Victor Talking Machine Company. It will repay you, then, to reflect upon the seeming daring of the statement in the previous paragraph and consider the momentous advances Victor must have made, and in fact has made, in its field—the epoch-marking advances that render such a statement not only possible, but literally true.

THREE TYPES OF VICTOR INSTRUMENTS

The new series of Victor instruments fall into three general classifications; the Orthophonic Victrola, the Electrola and the variety of cabinets enclosing the Radiola. In the Victrola, sound is amplified “acoustically,” through an Orthophonic system energized by the vibration of the sound-box diaphragm, which first of all is actuated by the movements of the needle as it passes through the record groove.

THE ORTHOPHONIC VICTROLA

The Orthophonic Victrola, in every particular except in volume, presents to you a duplication of musical performances as *close to perfection as Science has been able to achieve* in an instrument of this type. Indeed, in some cases it reaches perfection even in volume! No musical instrument in its field, regardless of size or price, can approximate its glorious musical performance. Every instrument of the acoustic-reproduction type, in this series of Victrolas, is a *true Orthophonic Victrola*, with the exception of the Portable Victrolas. Even these make such an advance toward Orthophonic performance as to mark them superior to many instruments double and triple their price.

THE ELECTROLA

The Electrola is radically and completely different in its system of reproduction, yet it is as truly Ortho-

phonic as the Victrola. “Orthophonic” (true-flowing sound) describes a principle of reproduction that is applied equally to Victrolas and Electrolas.

The Electrola reproduces sound through an electro-magnetic device called the “pick-up,” which follows the vibrations of the needle passing through the record groove, and changes them from mechanical to electrical vibrations; the amplifying-unit, which as its name suggests, amplifies the power of these vibrations; and the reproducing unit, which changes the amplified electrical vibrations back into the form of audible vibrations, or sound.

With the Electrola, the highest point of development in sound reproduction is reached. The mightiest thunders of the full symphony orchestra—even the *acoustic properties of the concert hall in which the orchestra plays!*—are reproduced by this astounding new instrument. They are not suggested . . . not imitated . . . not merely reproduced . . . but *uplicated in every detail* and, if you wish, with a power and volume that equal or exceed those of the original performance! What is even more notable, this is accomplished without the slightest distortion of tone quality, without rattling, blasting or other foreign noise. Yet at a touch, the instrument will play the same music, still without interference with its realism, in an intimate whisper of tone! With the Electrola, you not only select your artists, dictate your program, choose the hour and your favorite seat—but you even conduct the performance!

Because the Electrola reproduces even the acoustic properties of the room in which the music is played; because to your ears its performance is an absolute duplication of the music you would hear at the original performance; because the customary and inescapable distractions and foreign sounds of the concert hall, theatre or opera house are absent, it can with justice be asserted that the Electrola, in its highest type, gives a musical performance superior in many respects to the actual performance in the Concert Hall!

THE RADIOLA

The Radiola is widely known as the outstanding radio receiver. By the simple act of connecting it with an electrical outlet, you command the limitless spaces of the air, and gain admittance to great events, of every kind, everywhere. Since this famous receiver operates through the Electrola system of amplification, the finest possible reproduction is guaranteed; since it represents the supreme development of radio engineering by the world's foremost manufacturers of receiving sets, you

have assurance that its equal, or its superior, is not yet within the conception of radio science.

AUTOMATIC OPERATION

The last touch of luxury is added to the new Victor instruments by automatic operation. Not so long ago, a Victrola which would change its own records was looked upon as something to be wished for but not expected. A little more than a year ago Victor produced the first automatic Victrola and Electrola, and the public in a very brief time avidly absorbed the entire production of these instruments.

Now a new automatic mechanism has been developed—a definite improvement even upon the wonderfully ingenious and thoroughly reliable unit which preceded it. An automatic Victrola or Electrola requires only that you choose and arrange your program as you would wish to hear it by placing the records in the magazine provided—then forget everything but the music. An assortment of records of differing size may be played with no special arrangement or adjustment; single records may also be played—and the instrument automatically stops at completion of the record. The program of records may, by touching a button, be altered by the elimination of any record or records, even after the music has begun. Any record in the program may be repeated just as easily. An entire opera—and several operas have been recorded in their entirety by Victor—may be played from overture to finale. A concert program—music for dancing—any music or assortment of music you wish, may be played. There is no time limit on the program; the instrument will continue to operate automatically and without interruption, as long as records are kept in the magazine.

When the supreme luxury of automatic operation is combined with the unrivalled performance of the Victrola and Electrola, it must seem that no further addition to the delight of musical entertainment at home is possible!





IN REVIEW

(Reviews are by the *Graphic* editor unless identified otherwise)

Sousa Marches, Played by the Sousa Band: The Complete Commercial Recordings (1897-1930).

(Crystal Records, Frederick P. Williams, producer)

The opening eighteen seconds of this recent 3-CD set are enough to raise goose bumps on the most indifferent of listeners: "This is John Philip Sousa... I'm very glad to be here with my band representing my own country, America. I hoped you will enjoy hearing me again as much as I always enjoy playing for you. I've been asked to begin with a march that is an old favorite of mine. Maybe you'll recognize it." This modest little opening by a sweet old gentleman is followed by a 1929 radio broadcast of what else? "The Stars and Stripes Forever." (It must be remembered that most recordings of the Sousa Band were scaled down in size to fit the acoustic recording studios, and that Sousa rarely conducted his own band for these sessions. This, then, makes a wonderful opening recording—the full Sousa Band conducted by the director/composer, then in his 75th year!)

The set continues by playing a Sousa Band recording of every known Sousa march to have been waxed, in chronological order... in order of composition date, not recording. This is a little disconcerting at times, because sometimes we switch suddenly from a primitive acoustic recording to a booming electrical march, back to acoustic. On the other hand, we have an almost perfect progression of the Sousa repertoire, for a total of sixty-three cuts. Three more vintage recordings of "The Stars and Stripes" are interspersed throughout. After all, who could choose just one version?

Always a genius? Hardly! Sousa, not unlike Gershwin and Berlin, managed to write his share of forgettable compositions as well. Some of the forgotten ones are quite interesting, but others (such as 1893's "The Beau Ideal") are mediocre at best! Along with the forgotten marches are such titles as "Corcoran Cadets," "Mother Hubbard," "The Federal," and a favorite of mine, the 1930 "Harmonica Wizard"! (I should note that "The Harmonica Wizard" and "The Salvation Army" marches were both

unreleased by Victor, but fortunately we have them here.) They're **all** here... the good, the bad, and the passable!!

Long time *Graphic* readers may recall that producer Fred Williams ran ads looking for a copy of the elusive Monarch #3244, "The Honored Dead," to complete this project. He was finally able to locate the missing link so that the project could go forward.

The quality of the transfers is top notch, thanks to recording engineer Seth Winner. The early recordings still sound a hundred years old, but there is a great vibrancy to most of them, without sounding unnatural.

"The Complete Commercial Recordings?" Not likely. Why do recording companies resort to such misleading claims? For example, there are only two Columbia and two Edison 2-minute cylinders, and just three Berliners. Not one of the beautifully recorded 4-minute cylinders appears. What **does** make this complete is having at least one recording of every march known to have been recorded by the Sousa group. In his notes, Williams states that some 624 Sousa march discs and cylinders were auditioned for this set. So to call this "The Complete Commercial Recordings" is disingenuous at best. (I suspect that Fred Williams had nothing to do with this title choice!)

The set is accompanied by a fine 48-page of notes about Sousa, his marches, his recordings, as well as over a dozen wonderful photographs. Here is Sousa's Band in South Africa... Sousa's Band on the stage of the Brooklyn Strand Theatre... Sousa's Band at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, etc. One thing we have lost as we've progressed technologically, however, is the tiny-sized CD booklets we're forced to squint at in order to read. The pictures suffer the most. What might be a fascinating photo of the entire band in 1900 is barely two inches wide and less than an inch in height!

Sousa Marches Played by the Sousa Band (CD461-3) is a most important collection of Americana and will be enjoyed even after several playings. Brass band enthusiasts do not want to miss this set, and it will make an ideal holiday gift. We are told that Crystal Records compact discs are available in over a thousand stores. It may also be ordered from them at 28818 N.E. Hancock Rd., Camas, WA 98607 (360-834-7022), or visit their website at: www.crystalrecords.com

Reviews continued next page (top)

Pathe Records and Phonographs in America, 1914-1922 (Second Edition), by George A. Copeland and Ronald Dethlefsen.

The original printing of this groundbreaking work was sold out almost as soon as it was placed on the market. Fortunately, a new edition is now available!

This work was reviewed in issue #105, so I won't go into detail. However, some new material has been

added. Included is a sales brochure for the elusive Pathephonic (including the first view we've seen of what it looked like under the lid!), as well as some additional color label illustrations.

As with the first volume, this new printing is limited to 300 copies, so collectors are advised to obtain a copy as soon as possible. See the ad for this edition on the back page of this issue.

OBITUARIES

New York Times

June 1, 2000

Tex Beneke, 86, Saxophonist Who Sang Miller's Hits, Dies

By BEN RATLIFF

Tex Beneke, the tenor saxophone player and vocalist with the Glenn Miller Orchestra who sang one of its most famous hits, "Chattanooga Choo Choo," and led the band after Miller's plane disappeared in World War II, died on Tuesday at a convalescent home in Costa Mesa, Calif. He was 86.

The cheerful, sunny voice of the unassuming boy singer from Texas was ubiquitous on the American soundtrack in the early years of World War II. In 1941 the Miller orchestra introduced the Harry Warren-Mack Gordon song "Chattanooga Choo Choo" in the movie musical extravaganza "Sun Valley Serenade." Tex Beneke was joined by Paula Kelly and the Modernaires, and the Nicholas Brothers and Dorothy Dandridge danced along. The recording on the Blue Bird label was a million-seller.

Mr. Beneke's vocals were also heard on Miller hits like "I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo," "Ida! Sweet as Apple Cider" and "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree (With Anyone Else but Me)."

Born in Fort Worth, Tex., on Feb. 12, 1914, Gordon Beneke started playing the saxophone at the age of 9. He joined the Ben Young orchestra in 1935, playing one-nighters in the Midwest, and in 1938 he and the band found themselves in Detroit. The drummer Gene Krupa was looking for players to join his new orchestra and hired three players from the Young band, not including Mr. Beneke. But Krupa knew Glenn Miller, and over lunch in New York recommended Mr. Beneke to him. Miller called Mr. Beneke and offered him a job at a starting salary of \$50 a week.

Mr. Beneke's reply, as he recounted in a 1985 interview, was: "Tell you what I'll do, Glenn. I'll come with the band for \$52.50 a week." After a silence, Miller replied: "All right, I'll give it to you. But you're going to have to prove that you're worth the extra two and a half dollars."

When Mr. Beneke arrived at his first rehearsal, Miller greeted him with "O.K., Tex, get your horn," bestowing a permanent nickname.

At first Mr. Beneke was only a saxophonist in the Miller orchestra, but that soon changed. On tours, Mr.

The sunny voice of 'Chattanooga Choo Choo' and 'I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo.'

Beneke and Miller would take turns driving Miller's car, and one night Mr. Beneke was singing "Ida! Sweet as Apple Cider" to keep himself awake. Miller seized on the idea and asked Billy May, one of the band's arrangers, to write an arrangement for Mr. Beneke to sing in his gentle, Southern voice. Mr. Beneke agreed, although he had no previous professional singing experience. He soon became one of the band's most popular soloists.

Mr. Beneke was one of the day's popular jazz saxophonists. The critic Gunther Schuller, in his book "The Swing Era," described his even, romantic, easy-to-follow playing as a "smoothed-out Coleman Hawkins" style, and he was given many of the saxophone solos that dotted the orchestra's famous ensemble reed sound.

After appearing in the films "Orchestra Wives" and "Sun Valley Serenade," both of which feature Mr. Beneke's playing and singing, Miller dissolved his band in 1942 and joined the Army Air Corps. Mr. Beneke joined the Navy in 1943. In 1944 Miller's plane vanished without a trace in a flight from England to France, and his widow, Helen Miller, asked Mr. Beneke to take the Glenn Miller orchestra back out on the road.

He did, and the ghost band had a string of hits both on record and in the remaining dance palaces of America. In December 1947, even as the big band era faded, Tex Beneke and the Glenn Miller Orchestra played to a record-breaking crowd of 6,750 dancers at the Hollywood Palladium.

But by the late 1940's he grew tired of having to repeat the classic Miller arrangements at every appearance and quit the band to strike out on his own. His action may have led to his absence from the 1953 film "The Glenn Miller Story," which starred Jimmy Stewart as the bandleader and which made no mention of Mr. Beneke, who had played such a prominent role in the band's success.



General Artists Corp.

Tex Beneke, the saxophonist who took over Miller's band, in the 1940's.

Mr. Beneke's own band, Tex Beneke and his Orchestra, lasted for 50 years, recording for MCA and other labels. The Miller songbook was the mainstay of its repertoire, but the orchestra also performed the music of Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Tom-

my Dorsey and others. The Tex Beneke Orchestra, now under the operation of Jim Snodgrass, still tours and performs, and is based in Southern California.

Mr. Beneke is survived by his wife, Sandra, of Santa Ana, Calif.

Songwriter **Carl Sigman** died at his home in Manhasset, NY last September at the age of 91. Among the more familiar songs written by Mr. Sigman over the years are "Enjoy Yourself, It's Later Than You Think," "It's All in the Game," and "Crazy, He Calls Me." For the movie *Love Story* (1970) he composed his last big hit "Where Do I Begin." But for swing era fans, he will always be remembered for a 1938 song which promoted the 'phone number of the Hotel Pennsylvania....and if you dial "PA 6-5000," incredibly, you still get that famous hostelry!

Benjamin "Buzzy" Drootin, a jazz drummer who played with the likes of Louis Armstrong and Pee-wee Russell, died at the Actors Fund home in Englewood, NJ in May. He was 80.

Raymond "Yodeling Slim" Clark passed away in Maine at the age of 82 this past July. Beginning his recording career in the 1940s, he is credited with making over 100 records.

Our thanks to Ken Sweeney and Paul Charosh for assistance with this issue's obituaries.

12. A Rare Durium Document

by Martin F. Bryan

Many years ago, while a young high school lad, I was given a small cache of the popular Hit-of-the-Week records by a friend of my grandmother. The lot included some of the earlier issues and a number of the "5-Minute" discs. I was especially enchanted by #1156, "Pardon Me, Pretty Baby." It opens with six vibraphone notes, followed by a spoken announcement: "This is the new Durium Record playing for the first time five minutes of continuous quality music ... almost twice the playing time of the average record." I was immediately hooked, and have been a Durium fan ever since.

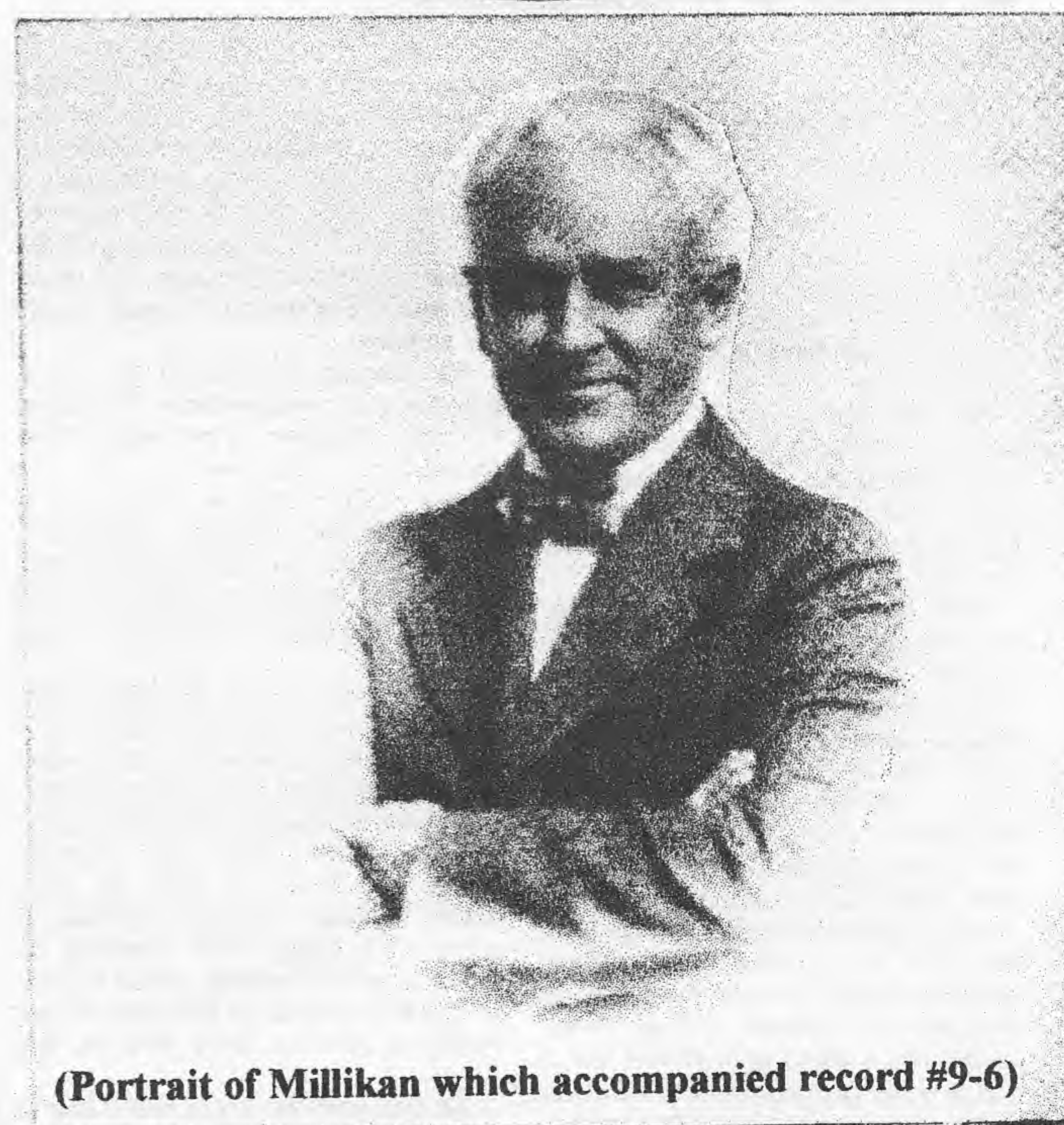
At some point I acquired the Hit-of-the-Week issue of Record Research magazine (issue #26, Jan./Feb. 1960). I read and re-read it. Durium had such high hopes for success in 1932; I fantasized that if I read the history enough times, Durium might succeed! I studied the listings, practically memorizing each title, marking them off as I acquired them. But, alas, by June the company was losing too much money, sales had dropped to about 1/8 of their previous high, and the last Hit-of-the-Week was placed on sale June 23, 1932.

A note in that old Record Research from *Variety* indicates "Durium will continue with the manufacture of advertising records," noting they had contracts with Chrysler, General Electric, Frigidaire, among others.

One of the clients Durium had in 1932 was Science Service, Inc., of Washington, D.C. Science Service distributed talks by notables in the field of science, presumably to schools, but it is not known whether or not the discs continued after the demise of Hit-of-the-Week. It is also not known whether these records were issued all at once, or on a weekly basis as with their commercial kin.

Science Service was established in 1921 "as a national news service providing stories about science to newspapers and other publications." It was formed to increase the public understanding of science. In 1922 they established the weekly *Science News-Letter*, changing to *Science News* in 1966. It is still published today; and it is even available in an online edition! (This information and quote come from their website.)

All Science Service records seen are 10" (actually just over 9 1/2" like Hit-of-the-Weeks) and of the fine 5-minute groove; each was accompanied by a 9"x 8 1/2" sheet of paper with a portrait of the speaker on the front. On the reverse was a printed biography of the scientist along with a printed text of his message. (Quite helpful in the case of at least one of the speakers!)



(Portrait of Millikan which accompanied record #9-6)

It was probably a dozen years ago I acquired seven of the Science Service records, along with their accompanying picture/text sheets. I was interested to note that two of them were documented in the Record Research issue, but that I had five more. They are numbered 9-6 through 9-12. Were there earlier releases 9-1 through 9-5? In any event, a brief listing of my seven issues follows:

- 9-6 (mx. 5042A) - Dr. ROBERT A. MILLIKAN / Nobel Laureate in Physics, 1923 California Institute of Technology Speaks on "The Rise of Physics"
- 9-7 (mx. 5043B) - Dr. LEO H. BAEKELAND / Inventor of Bakelite, Velox, Etc. Speaks on "Chemistry and Civilization"
- 9-8 (mx. 5069B) - Dr. WILLIAM H. WELCH / Johns Hopkins University Speaks on "The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Discovery of the Tubercle Bacillus"
- 9-9 (mx. 5068A) - Dr. JOHN C. MERRIMAN / President, Carnegie Institute of Washington Speaks on "The Record of the Rocks"
- 9-10 (mx. 5070A) - Dr. KARL T. COMPTON / President, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Speaks on "Science and Engineering"
- 9-11 (mx. 5080B) - Dr. EDWIN G. CONKLIN / Princeton University Speaks on "The Mystery of Life"
- 9-12 (mx. 5079B) - Dr. WILLIAM M. MANN / Director, National Zoological Park, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Speaks on "Our Animal Friends"

These 5000 matrix numbers coincide with other Durium special products of 1932.

Now here is the bonus in the lot I acquired! A very flimsy folded sheet of 8 1/2" x 14" paper contained a little mimeographed story about Science Service Records. Titled "How Science Service Phonograph Records are Made," it obviously outlines the *very same* process Durium used for Hit-of-the-Week. Never having taken chemistry, I am not familiar with many of the products described. But I can't help wonder if somewhere in the greater New York area is the old Durium dump—a toxic waste site still awaiting EPA clean-up!

What follows is (I believe) the first description of the Durium manufacturing process to be published in sixty-eight years!

~~~~ooOoo~~~~

### HOW SCIENCE SERVICE PHONOGRAPH RECORDS ARE MADE

Applied science made possible the development of the unique, long playing, durable phonograph record upon which the educational addresses of eminent scientists are brought to you. Durium Products, Inc., manufacturers of the Science Service records, have supplied the following description of the manufacture of the records. It is believed that this information will be of interest to scientists, teachers and science students, particularly those in the field of chemistry.

Durium phonograph records, used by Science Service for its science records, are the first to be made of a synthetic resin. The ordinary type of heavy composition record is made of powdered inert filler held together by shellac. Durium records consist of a

flexible fiber board backing coated with a thin layer of Durium in which the sound channels are impressed.

Durium is the trade name for a synthetic phenol aldehyde resin made with resorcinol, - a dihydroxy-phenol - which is used. The condensation reaction is carried out according to the usual procedure with formaldehyde. When the condensation is complete and the resin formed, it is then modified with certain special ingredients which give it plasticity, a fair degree of flexibility and a high degree of resiliency and strength. The ingredients used for modifying the resin are at present trade secrets and therefore can not be named. After the modification of the resin it is dissolved in methanol, forming a liquid varnish.

The fiber backing is of three-ply paper pulp containing a high proportion of jute fiber and conforms to very close thickness and porosity limits. It must be absolutely free of lumps or impurities.

The paper board is manufactured in long rolls and runs through a roller coating machine. The Durium varnish is put into this machine and coated on the paper by means of rollers. The coated paper after passing through the machine runs at very slow speed into a long horizontal drying chamber which is gas heated. The temperature of the chamber and the velocity of air passing through it are controlled within very narrow limits. In this chamber the solvent in the Durium is evaporated and carried off and the Durium resin transformed by the heat from the fusible soluble stage to a fusible insoluble form. As the coated paper emerges from this chamber the uncoated side passes



4.

first over a drying drum which removes any excess moisture in the paper. This is then cut into sheets 32 x 42 inches.

The fusion point of Durium resin is decidedly higher than that of the ordinary phenol-formaldehyde type resin and for that reason a much higher pressing temperature is required. Furthermore, Durium transforms to the infusible insoluble stage many times quicker than ordinary phenol-formaldehyde and for that reason the comparatively slow acting hydraulic type of press can not be used. Mechanically operated embossing type of presses with a gas platen are used.

Nickel plated casts of the wax in which the sound channels are engraved during the recording of the record impress the same channels into the Durium that were made in the initial wax. Twelve records are imprinted in each operation of the press, and the press turns out 14 sheets per minute, or 168 records per minute.

After pressing, the sheets on which the records are imprinted are back coated with a water proofing solution in order to prevent the absorption of moisture of the uncoated side which would result in distortion of the record.

The next step is a one color printing of the title in silver ink. The records are printed while they are still in sheet form.

The operation following the printing is that of cutting out the twelve records from each sheet and is done on the ordinary type of cut out press.

Following this operation the cut out records pass to the Inspection Department where they are carefully examined and tested so that nothing but perfect records reach the ultimate customer.

~~~~~ooOoo~~~~~

C u r i o s i t y

"Everything Old Is New Again"

O

It's amazing how we take "new" ideas and "new" innovations for granted. The Compact Disc, for example, employs a thin sheet of foil as a recording medium, and yet, Thomas Edison used the same medium nearly 125 years ago! And speaking of CDs, has anyone noticed that they play on just one side??

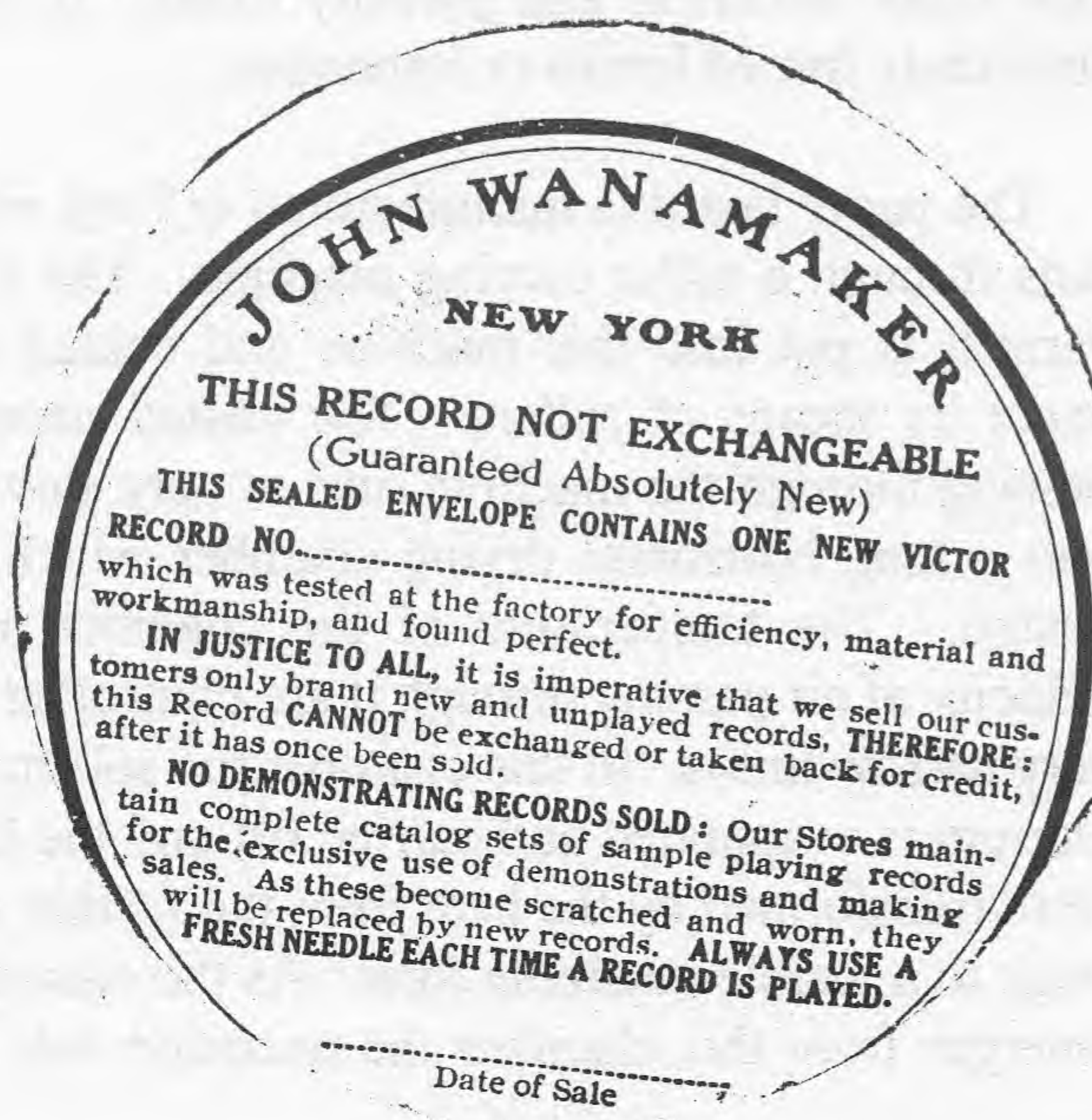
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Reader Ken Sweeney picked up on this theme when he found a Victor Record sleeve with a Wanamaker's seal. He writes, "You know those little silver-colored adhesive strips the compact disc manufacturers put on the plastic CD case to keep them from being opened and the CDs from being stolen? Well, guess what?" It seems the Wanamaker Stores employed an identical device some 85 years go so that customers could not return their records after the seal had been broken!



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